DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 114 834 CS 202 353

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TITLE Semantics: A Unit of Study, Grades 7, 8, 9.
INSTITUTION Needham Public Schools, Mass.
PUB DATE 72
NOTE 64p.; Not available in hard copy due to marginal legibility of original document

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.76 Plus Postage. HC Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS *Communication (Thought Transfer); *Course Descriptions; Course Objectives; Critical Thinking; Junior High Schools; *Language Skills; *Language Usage; Propaganda; *Semantics; Teaching Methods

ABSTRACT

The main objective in this semantics unit is to sharpen the students' powers of critical thinking while increasing their sensitivity to the language. The course of study for grade 7 contains four lessons: referent and symbol, levels of abstraction, argument, and fact and opinion. The grade 8 course of study features the following lessons: similes and metaphors, hyperbole and personification, euphemism, and advertising analysis. The ninth grade course focuses on various types of propaganda from the glittering generality to the bandwagon approach. Each lesson presents objectives, lists materials needed, and describes procedures. (LL)

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# SEMANTICS

## A Unit of Study

Grades 7,8,9

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Summer, 1972

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CS 202 353

## INTRODUCTION

The proposed course of study in Semantics is an attempt to encourage students to analyze contemporary language --- to let them compare textbook language with the language used in the real world. In the study of the skills listed here by grade levels, students are made aware of how words use people and how people use words: how words affect their every day life. The sensitivity to words is the main objective in teaching the Semantics unit.

The ultimate goal of this unit is to sharpen the student's powers of critical thinking as he analyzes his own language.

SEMANTICS: Grade 7

OBJECTIVES:

A. To study the following concepts:
   1. Beginnings of language
   2. Symbol and referent
   3. Levels of abstraction
   4. Connotation and denotation of words
   5. Point of view
   6. Fact and opinion (reports, false reports, judgments)

B. To show practical application of these concepts

MATERIALS:

Understanding Language I: The Magic of Words

Understanding Language II: How Words Use You

Mimeographed materials

REFERENCES:

Language of Man I - by J. F. Littell

Man Must Speak: The Story of Language and How We Use It - by Roy A. Gallant

What I Tell You Three Times is True - by Jessica Davidson

SEMANTICS: Grade 8

OBJECTIVES:

A. To review the Semantics skills of grade seven

B. To apply the semantics skills of grade seven to advertising analysis.

C. To study the techniques of figurative language as it applies to advertising (simile, metaphor, personification, hyperbole, euphemism)

MATERIALS:

Understanding Language III: The Impact of Words

Mimeographed materials

REFERENCES:

Language of Man II - by J. F. Littell

Madison Avenue, U.S.A. - by Martin Mayer

The Hidden Persuaders - by Vance Packard

SEMANTICS: Grade 9

OBJECTIVES:

A. To review the Semantics skills of grades seven and eight

B. To recognize, analyze, and utilize the methods of persuasion

C. To analyze propaganda techniques

MATERIALS:

Understanding Language IV: The Levels of Meaning

Mimeographed materials

REFERENCES:

Understanding Language III: The Impact of Words

The Language of Man VI - by J. F. Littell

Propaganda, Polls and Opinions - by Malcolm G. Mitchell

SEMANTICS: General Reference Books - Grades 7, 8, 9

Chase, Stuart. Danger - Man Talking

Chase, Stuart. The Power of Words

Chase, Stuart. The Tyranny of Words

Hayakawa, S. I. Language in Thought and Action

Littell, J. F. The Language of Man IV

Littell, J. F. The Language of Man V

Littell, J. F. The Language of Man VI

Minter, Catherine. Words and What They Do to You

Postman, Neil and Charles Weingartner. Linguistics (Chapter 6: "Semantics")

GRADE 7 COURSE OF STUDY

LESSON #1: REFERENT AND SYMBOL

OBJECTIVES: To define referent and symbol

To recognize that a symbol is arbitrarily assigned to a referent

To recognize that symbols help communication only if we agree on the referents they stand for.

MATERIALS: Mimeographed materials

PROCEDURES:

A. (A better class might omit or use only part of this section and move on to Section B without this careful preparation.)

To illustrate the arbitrariness of language ask the class to label objects in the room with sound patterns different from those they normally use. Tell them each object named must be easy to touch without having to stand on something. This will eliminate the ceiling, lights, etc. Example: Let's call the flag a "sponch" and the window a "noppet." After the class has labeled about ten objects, make up signs on 3 x 5 cards with the new words on them. Place the cards on the object and tell the class you will give them five minutes to memorize the new name for each object.

After the class has had sufficient time to memorize the new names, ask them to write some short sentences in which they refer to the objects by their new names. Eg.: The sponch waved proudly in the breeze." "Would you please open the noppet. It's terribly warm in here."

1. Collect the students' sentences and to provide interest split the class into two sections and tell them they will be treated as two teams. Tell them that you will read the sentence aloud and when one of the new words that they created is used, one person from each team must touch the object mentioned. To insure that all the students aren't running about the room, emphasize that only one in each group will be allowed out of his seat. Simply number the rows in each group and say that for the first sentence read the front person in the first row will be responsible for touching the object. For the next sentence the person behind him will be responsible, and so on until everyone has had a chance. Tell them that the other members of the team will not be allowed to refer to the object by its original name. Eg.: They cannot call a sponch a flag. If they do refer to the object by its original name, their team will be disqualified for that sentence and the other team will receive the point.

2. After each person has had a chance to participate and score has been determined, ask the class how they knew what objects they were supposed to touch.
   a. How did you know what object was being referred to? (The class has agreed to the new symbol.)
   b. Why did some members of the class have difficulty? (They forgot the new symbol for the referent.)
   c. Why do we use the names we do? (No reason for any particular name, but we must all agree to communicate.)

B. To provide the class with a beginning vocabulary in semantics, tell the class that among speakers of English, people have decided to call the flag a flag, to call sun by the word sun, etc. Speakers of other languages will call them by different sounds. These sounds--flag, sun, mirror, car, etc. -- stand for something or call our attention to particular things.

   1. Does anyone know what we call something that stands for something else? (Symbol)
   2. The particular things which symbols stand for are called referents. The only way to show a referent is to point it out.
      a. What is the referent for blackboard?
      b. What is the referent for table?

C. After the class has pointed to several referents in the room, have each student take an object from his pocket or purse and hold it in his hand. Then ask the student to demonstrate to the class the referent and the symbol of the object he is holding.

D. To illustrate to the students that language is an arbitrary assignment of sounds to referents, ask the class questions such as the following:
   1. Why do you stand when the American flag is presented during an assembly?
   2. What is the flag?
   3. What does it mean to you?
   4. Why do we call the flag flag?
   5. Why don't we call the flag sun and the sun flag?
   6. Who taught you to call this (point to the flag) a flag? Where did this person learn that it was called a flag?
   7. Why is it useful that we all know that this (point to flag) is called a flag?
   8. What would happen if we did not have a word for this (point to flag)? How would I let you know what I was talking about if I didn't have a word for flag?

E. Ask for three volunteers to come to the front of the room. Have one student pretend he cannot use his hands and arms. Number him Number One. Have another student pretend he cannot speak. Number him Number Two. Have the third student pretend he can neither speak, see, nor use his hands and arms. Number him Number Three. Tell Number One and Number Three that they must not move from the places where you put them. Number Two may move about the room. Take an object from your pocket or

from some place in the room and ask each of the three students questions such as the following:

1. Can you indicate what the symbol of this object is?
2. Can you indicate what the referent is of this object I am holding?

Student Number One will be able to indicate the symbol for the object because he can speak. Students Number Two and Three will not. Students number One and Three will not be able to indicate the referent of the object because they cannot point at it, but student Number Two will.

F. Have the three students in the front of the room and ask the class questions such as the following:

1. Why was student Number One able to identify the symbol of the object I held? (He was able to speak.)
2. Why weren't students Number Two and Three able to do the same thing? (They could not speak.)
3. Why was Student Number Two able to indicate the referent of the object I held? (He could point to it.)
4. Why weren't students Number One and Three able to indicate the referent? (They could not point to it or hold it up to the class.)
5. From this demonstration what would you say was one of the major ways we use symbols? (In our speech)
6. What is one of the best ways to indicate a referent? (Point it out to someone so he can see it.)
7. What must you have to get ideas across to others if you use only referents? (The objects themselves)
8. Why are the symbols of speech so helpful to us? (We can discuss referents without having them present.)
9. Do we call a dog "dog" because he has attributes that force us to label him with this symbol, or is the label simply arbitrary and established through agreement Explain.

MOTHER TONGUE

By Richard Armour

Oh, to be in England,
If only 'arf a mo',
Where, when they speak of wireless,
They mean a radio;

Where Private schools are public
And public schools are snobby
And insurance is assurance
And a cop is called a bobby.

Where a traffic hum's a circus
And up is down the street
And a sweater is a jumper
And candy is a sweet;

Where a cracker is a biscuit
And a trifle is dessert
And bloody is a cuss word
And an ad is an advert;

Where gasoline is petrol
And a stone is fourteen pound
And motorcars have bonnets
And you take the Underground;

Where, holding up your trousers,
It's braces that you use
And a truck is called a lorry
And boots are really shoes;

Where a druggist is a chemist
And the movies are the flicks
And you queue up on the pavement
For a stall at three and six....

There is no language barrier
The tourist needs to dread
As long as he knows English
From A to Z (no, zed).

Using the information in the poem as a guide, check the sentences that you think might appear in a story in a British setting:

1. The governess ordered codliver oil and vitamin tablets from the chemist.

2. The portrait showed Becky's grandmother wearing a frilled bonnet.

3. Since the rain was coming down in torrents, the boys put on their slickers and boots.

4. Almost all the stalls were filled when Mrs. Radcliffe arrived at the theatre.

5. Caroline had knitted the white jumper to wear with a blue skirt.

6. The agent gave Mr. Kitner assurance that the policy covered fire.

7. The children's eyes grew wide as they saw their aunt bringing the trifle to the table.

8. Two busses collided yesterday at Piccadilly Circus.

9. The restaurant was famous for its fried chicken and hot biscuits.

10. Because Neville's family was extremely wealthy, he was enrolled in a public school.

11. Janet had learned the American slang from watching the flicks.

12. Patty gave her tail a flick and walked into the center ring.

13. On their way home the family stopped at a sweets shop for ice-cream.

14. Mr. Radley lifted the bonnet and peered under at the motor.

WHAT DO WE MEAN BY MEANING?

Some years ago a famous English explorer was asked to speak at Dartmouth College on his adventures in the African jungle. A large number of students showed up, eager to hear about the strange people and exotic customs that the explorer had seen.

He didn't disappoint them. "I've seen a people," he said, "who love to eat the embryo of certain birds and slices from the belly of certain animals. For something to go with this dish, they grind up grass seed, make it into a paste and burn it over heat until it turns color. Then they smear it with a greasy substance extracted from the mammary fluid of certain animals. Can you imagine anyone so primitive?"

The students looked startled by such a barbaric practice.

"Of course," added the explorer softly, "what I have been describing is..."

Doesn't it sound weird?

Word meanings don't exist by themselves in a vacuum. They really don't exist until they take shape in someone's mind, and since people are different with different backgrounds and attitudes, each individual may see the word in a different way.

What about the meaning of the word "teen-ager"? It can arouse different emotions in different people. Language, therefore, can be used to play on your emotions and influence your attitudes. There are many word traps that lead ideas astray. You must learn how to be alert as a listener and as a reader.

WORKSHEET FOR LESSON 1

SYMBOLS - REFERENT

a. A symbol gets its meaning from its referent but is not the same thing.

b. A symbol is arbitrarily assigned to its referent.

c. Before a symbol may have widespread use and effectiveness, people must agree on what it stands for.

Above are three statements about symbols and referents. Below are statements made by people who do not know what symbols and referents are. Consequently, they make mistakes. Beside each statement write the letter of the information the person needs to know to correct his mistake.

_____ 1. Dear Sean Connery,
There have been a series of mysterious happenings in my neighborhood. My life is in danger. Will you help me?

_____ 2. Of course her name is Jane. It has to be. She looks like a Jane.

_____ 3. What do you mean when you ask why the stars and stripes stand for the United States? That's a stupid question. They have to; that's all.

_____ 4. What do you mean when you say an international language won't work because people will never take the time to learn it? That's beside the point.

_____ 5. Don't cry Jimmy. It's just a movie. Steve McQueen's not really dead.

_____ 6. Why do we have to vote on the junior high school's new colors? Why doesn't someone just decide? I don't see why everyone has to be in on it.

_____ 7. Just seeing the word "snake" makes me afraid.

_____ 8. I think a dog is called a dog because the name dog is given to the lowest form of animal.

_____ 9. Sailors used to have the word H-O-L-D-F-A-S-T tatooed on the backs of their hands. The tattoo was supposed to keep them from falling off the yardarm.

_____10. In 1939 the Cambridge City Council passed a law making it illegal to possess or transport any magazine, article, etc., containing the words Lenin or Leningrad.

LESSON #2 LEVELS OF ABSTRACTION

OBJECTIVES: To identify the levels of abstraction symbols that refer to the same object.

To make a graphic illustration of the levels of abstraction.

To infer the necessity of the process of abstraction.

MATERIALS: "The Necessity of Abstraction"
Mimeographed Materials

PROCEDURES:

A. To demonstrate to the students the process of abstraction, select a student who is not easily flustered and have him sit in the front of the room. Ask the students to supply a symbol that identifies as clearly as possible the student in the front of the room. The students will usually identify the student by his name. Write this on the blackboard. Then ask them if there are other ways to identify the student in front of the room. The students will usually say that he is --

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| a boy | a human | a living creature |
| a student | an animal | an object |

Write their responses on the blackboard. Then ask the students if they really wanted someone to know exactly who they were talking about in a conversation, what would be the best way to indicate or identify the person. (Point him out.) Tell them that it is not always possible to have the person we are talking about present, so we must rely on the symbols of the spoken language to get our ideas across. Then tell them that they used several symbols to identify the boy in the front of the room and that some symbols identify him more exactly than others. To illustrate this ask questions such as the following:

1. Which symbol is the most precise in identifying this student?
2. Which one is the least precise?
3. Which symbols could refer to other referents beside the one in the front of the room?
4. Which symbol refers to the hightest number of referents? To the least number?

B. Ask the students to list the symbols on the board on a piece of paper so that the symbols that refer to the least number of referents are on the bottom of a scale and those that refer to the highest number of referents are on the top of the scale. Tell them that the symbols will refer to one or two referents, 100 referents, 1,000 referents, a million referents, a billion referents and all referents and that the symbols should appear on a scale somewhat like the following:

6. All referents.
5. billion referents.
4. million referents.
3. Thousand referents.
2. Hundred referents.
1. One or two referents.

C. After the students have created their scales, have some of them write their scales on the blackboard. Review each of the scales on the blackboard allowing the class to point out errors as each of the students who wrote his scale on the blackboard defends his arrangement of the symbols. Then ask the class what they said was the best way to identify the object they've been talking about. (Point to it or show it to someone.) Then ask the class questions such as the following:

1. Is what we see when we look at the boy in any way an abstraction?
2. Do we really see the total boy when we look at him?
3. What things are part of the boy that cannot be seen or measured scientifically?
4. How much of anything do we actually perceive with the sense of sight?
5. Is the thing we see the actual total thing or a distortion (abstraction)?

After the students have dealt with these questions sufficiently, write a definition such as the following on the bottom of the scale.

The boy we see: Not the symbol (word), but the boy that the experience of sight allows us to perceive. Not the thing itself, but that which is abstracted by the process of sight because we cannot see the total boy. (His insides, his thoughts, his emotions, etc.)

D. Now ask the class if there is a method by which the total boy might be known even if only momentarily. What class do you attend that takes most of its time helping you learn ways of describing things and how they work? In what class do you disect things to find out all the parts that make it up? (Science) After the class has briefly discussed the scientific method write on the blackboard at the bottom of the scale of abstraction something such as the following.

The boy as described as known to science: The boy in reality made up of atoms, electrons, behaviorial habits, etc. The characteristics of the boy if they were to be described completely are almost infinite and are changing from one moment to the next.

E. Number each item in the scale on the blackboard starting with one for the item on the bottom until all items are numbered. Then ask the class questions such as the following:

1. Which item includes the most characteristics of the object being described?
2. Which one contains the least?
3. On the scale created what happens to the specific characteristics that identify the object we are talking about as we move up the scale? (They are fewer.)
4. Is it necessary to know about those items below the given item on the scale in order to understand those above them? Why?
5. Why would it be almost impossible to communicate using only the bottom two items on the scale? What would happen to communication.

F. Pass out to the class "The Necessity of Abstraction," and go over the study questions with them.

WORKSHEET
LEVELS OF ABSTRACTION

A. Arrange each list according to the levels of abstraction, with number one as the least abstract (fewest referents).

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | actress | 4._____ | 2. | skunk | 4._____ |
| | people | 3._____ | | matter | 3._____ |
| | Hollywood starlet | 2._____ | | living thing | 2._____ |
| | Jane Joyful | 1._____ | | animal | 1._____ |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 3. | newspaper | 4._____ |
| | Boston Globe | 3._____ |
| | daily newspaper | 2._____ |
| | reading material | 1._____ |

B. Fill in the blanks in the levels of abstraction:

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1.) | 4. entertainers | 2) 4._____ | 3.) 4. object |
| | 3. _____ | 3. flower | 3. vegetable kingdom |
| | 2. male singers | 2. rose | 2. _____ |
| | 1. Beatles | 1. American beauty rose | 1. elm |
| 4.) | 4. printed matter | 5.) 4._____ | 6.) 4. matter |
| | 3. book | 3. means of transportation | 3. _____ |
| | 2. paperback | 2. automobile | 2. human being |
| | 1. _____ | 1. Mustang | 1. George |

C. Make up your own levels of abstraction:

Suggestions: Bobby Orr
Rin-Tin-Tin
Pollard Junior High School

"The Necessity for Abstraction"
by Louis L. Mentor

Once upon a time on a beautiful island there lived five tribes. Each tribe had a leader. One tribe called its leader king," another called its leader "president," another called its leader "emperor," another called its leader "premier," and the last called its leader "dictator." None of the tribes for thousands of years had ever met someone from another tribe.

One day, though, a flood caused all the people of all the tribes to flee to the mountain that was located in the center of the island. Each person was shocked to see that other people lived on the island and they went running to their separate leaders to tell them what they had seen. The leaders, of course, were aware of the presence of foreigners and each determined in a spirit of generosity to take all the people on the mountain under his protection.

The king sent out a messenger to the foreign people telling them that he would care for them. The other leaders did the same. Each was very surprised to receive messages that some funny sounding thing wanted to take care of his people. The "king" asked his advisors what were those things called premier, dictator, president and emperor. The wise men could not answer for they, like the king, had never heard of any such thing. This process was repeated in the other four tribes and no one could answer the leaders' questions.

Weeks passed as the flood continued to cover the island and the five tribes sat in separate groups near the top of the mountain. One day as the king's servants carried him out of his hut he noticed that one person in each of the other tribes was being carried out of a hut in a similar fashion. At first he was angry, but he controlled himself and watched the activities of the other tribes. He noticed that the same men gave orders as he did, ate well as he did, and in general were treated in much the same manner as he was. While he was pondering his discovery, the premier, the president, the dictator and the emperor were doing the same thing, for they too had observed what had happened in the morning and had been watching the other tribes throughout the day.

The king after much painful thought and a discussion with his wise men concluded, although he did not particularly like the idea, that the other four men must also be kings. He resolved that for the purpose of survival he would try to be nice to the other kings, so he sent each a message.

> "I, the Royal Mark of Life, King of the Earth, do salute you. I request that you as a King of some Foreigners meet me on the top of Holy Mountain."
>
> Signed,
> The King

Each of the other leaders sent the same message to the other tribes, but in place of the word king, they substituted the word Premier, President, Dictator or Emperor, depending upon who sent the message. When each received the messages from the others, he could not understand it, because he did not know what was meant by the titles used by the other leaders. Despite the misunderstanding each went to the top of the mountain because he had requested that the others meet him there.

When they all assembled there was confusion because none of them really knew how to deal with those that were almost equal to him in rank. The day was successful, though, because each leader relied on his wise men for advice. The leaders discovered that in essence the words king, premier, dictator, emperor and president meant the same thing, because each man fulfilled the same function. They worked well together and decided that they would cooperate with each other, but one great problem arose. The leaders, when referring to all the other leaders, got tired of using all the titles in a string such as the king, emperor, dictator, president, premier--depending upon who was talking, because it just took too much time. The king suggested that they all be referred to as kings, but the others said no, their titles were more appropriate. No one would agree and just as things looked like they were going to break up, an old wise man spoke. His words save the entire conference. He said, "Oh, great King, Emperor, Dictator, Premier and President, why don't we refer to all of you together as leaders, a new word your humble servant just created, and refer to each of you separately by your title?

Each agreed that this in no way was offensive so from then on whenever the five tribes got together they saved time in their conversation and got along better because each tribe saw it had a great deal in common with the others--it too had a Leader.

STUDY GUIDE: "The Necessity for Abstraction"

1. Why did the leaders of the five tribes have difficulty understanding each others' titles?

2. Why was each leader surprised when the others said they would care for his people?

3. Why were they surprised when the people did not come to them for protection?

4. How did each leader conclude that the others were leaders also?

5. Why did the creation of the word "Leader" solve the problem that was troubling the leaders?

6. Why do you think it is necessary to be able to use abstractions in your conversation? How do they help you communicate?

"Let's Get Specific" - from Read Magazine, March 1, 1969.

"I got into my transportation and drove it away toward town."

"I put my music on the sound equipment and watched it spin around and around."

"I took my human being to the entertainment the other night, and then we ate food at the place of recreation."

Do you notice anything vaguely strange about the sentences above? If so, can you pin down the thing that makes them sound odd? Take a minute or so and really try to find it.
(Pause for thought.)

All right, those sentences got their weird feeling from the words "transportation," "music," "sound equipment," "human being," "entertainment," "food," and "place of recreation." The thing about those words is that they are too general. They are too broad in range and include too much. They are not specific.

Let's go through and pin them down:
"transportation" - car
"music" - Neil Diamond record
"sound equipment" - record player
"human being" - grandmother

Get what we mean? You can probably finish the list yourself.

What we want you to see is that words can move up various levels from specific to general. Some words signify only one thing. Others include a whole range of things--they are much less specific and much more abstract.

All right, so what are we driving at? Why are we making this big deal about specific and general levels of abstraction? We're making this big deal because levels of abstraction have much to do with the meanings of words. And abstract words have a lot to do with the way people misunderstand each other and get into arguments that can't really solve anything. We'll show you what we mean:

FATHER: The music kids listen to these days is nothing but a bunch of ugly noise.

SON: No it isn't. It's great.

There's very little chance that anything but hot tempers will emerge from a "discussion" like this. Why? The level of abstraction is too high.

What does the father mean by "music?" Does he mean Herb Alpert? Does he mean Aretha Franklin? Songs from The Sound of Music"? Sousa marches? Bach and Mozart? Various young people listen to all these things.

And who does the father mean by "kids"? His own sons and daughters? The young people next door? His three-year-old nephew? Is he trying to say that all these people have the same taste in music?

And what about "ugly noise"? Is the father referring to the rhythms,

to the melodies, to the sound levels? Does he object to the instruments used or to the musicians?

You see? The father's statement is so general, so abstract, that it cannot be the basis for intelligent discussion. And the son's answer is just as bad. It insists that the music is great without pinning down what is meant by "music" or "great". There again is a high level of abstraction.

If the discussion is going to accomplish anything, it would have to go something like this:

FATHER: The music kids listen to these days in nothing but a bunch of ugly noise.

SON: What kids do you mean?

FATHER: Teen-agers

SON: That includes me, and I like Beethoven.

FATHER: I don't mean Beethoven. I mean these guys who scream and bang on electric guitars.

SON: Like the Beatles?

FATHER: Yes, like the Beatles.

SON: But the Beatles wrote "Yesterday" and you said that was a great song.

FATHER: I didn't mean that one. I mean those ones where all they do is scream and pound the drums.

SON: You mean you don't like songs with a lot of rhythm?

FATHER: I guess so.

SON: But all composers use rhythm in one way or another.

FATHER: Well, it's the way these rock bands yell and carry on.

SON: You mean you object to the way they do it more than the music itself?

FATHER: Something like that.

Obviously, this discussion can go on for a long time. But at least, it <u>is</u> a discussion. Father and son are pinning down the subject and bringing in specifics. Maybe the son will suggest something about today's music that his father has never seen before. Maybe he will change his father's attitude slightly. Maybe not.

But now--on this specific level--they are exchanging ideas. Their words mean something. Before--on an abstract level--their statements were sliding by each other.

Abstract words are so broad and general that no one can be sure of their

meaning. For this reason some people use them on purpose--to make their statements as vague as possible.

A politician says, "I stand four-square behind democracy, freedom, and the people." This statement sounds fine, but what does it mean? What does the politican mean by "democracy"? Communist East Germany calls itself the German Democratic Republic. Is that what the politican means? What does he mean by "freedom"? Freedom to resist the draft or to seize a college? Whom does he mean by the "people"? Would he support the demands of racial minorities?

A commercial says, "Take Sufferin, the ten-way tablet, and end the ills of colds and colds' discomfort. What ills can Sufferin end? How does it work? What specirically does it have that a plain old aspirin tablet does not have?

And you yourself probably use many abstractions every day. Have you ever said, "School is lousy." Then what do you mean by school? The building itself? A certain course? One of the teachers? If you start pinning down the ideas in your own mind, you might find that there's a lot about school that isn't lousy after all.

So remember, real meaning and high abstractions don't mix well. When you hear a statement, bring it down to earth. See if it has any specifics that will let you analyze what it says. And if it doesn't, don't swallow its message. You might end up full of hot air.

LESSON #3

OBJECTIVES: To define denotation

To define connotation, both affective and informative

To examine and explain how writers use words to color their writing.

To write short passages that distinguish between those with "good" or "neutral" connotations and those with "bad" connotations.

MATERIALS: Mimeographed materials.

PROCEDURES:

A. To introduce the students to denotation hold some object in your hand and ask the class what the symbol for the object is. Then ask them what the referent is. Tell them that the word referent is the same as the word denotation. They are synonymous. Tell them that whenever they are asked for a denotation of a word they should not say a word but simply point at the object.

B. To illustrate to the class that some words have no denotation, ask members of the class to indicate the denotation of words such as love, devil, freedom, eternity, etc. The class will not be able to indicate these items because the items cannot be seen, felt, drawn, photographed, or detected by any scientific method. There is no way of measuring their existence. This does not mean that the items do not exist. It simply means that if an argument arises in which these items are used, no scientific proof can be brought to bear and the argument could be endless.

C. To illustrate the above point write on the blackboard the classic question: "How many angels can dance on the head of a pin?" Ask several members of the class if they know. If some try to answer the question, let them do so for a few minutes. Then ask them what the denotation of an angel is. Show them why the argument cannot be ended and pass out the "Worksheet on Argument" and have them point out the kind of arguments that can be brought to an end and those that cannot. Discuss each item with the class.

D. To introduce the students to affective connotation write words such as horse, woman, house and show on the blackboard and ask the students to suggest other symbols for the referent of the label on the blackboard that make the referent appear worse or better than it is. Examples:

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | Horse | hay burner<br>nag | trotter<br>pacer<br>thoroughbred |
| 2. | House | shack<br>dump | castle<br>home |
| 3. | ignorant | dumb<br>stupid | slow<br>exceptional |

After the students have given suggestions, ask them what the differences are among the various words for the same referent. They should be able to distinguish between the "bad" and "good" affective connotation of words used for the same referent. Label the feeling associated with the word affective connotation.

E. To reinforce the concept of affective connotation and to introduce the concept of informative connotation write the word "Communism" on the blackboard and ask them to write on a sheet of paper a definition for the word and explain how they feel about the word when they hear it. When they have completed the assignment, collect the papers and read several of the definitions. Then read the definition of Communism from a good dictionary. Follow this by reading several of the comments about how students feel when they hear the word and ask the class questions such as the following:

1. Which passage most accurately and objectively defines Communism? Why?
2. Why weren't many of your definitions as good?
3. What is the difference between the definition you gave and attitude you expressed about the word Communism?
4. Do you think that all the people in the world feel the same way toward the word Communism as you do? Would all people be likely to agree with the dictionary definition or your attitude toward it? Explain.

F. Tell the class that the definitions they gave and the dictionary definition are called the informative connotations of a word. In other words the definition is the socially agreed upon meaning, the so-called "impersonal" meanings. Tell them this is as close as we can come to give the meanings of words by the use of other symbols (words). The best way of course is to point to the object so others can see it. The feelings associated with words are called affective connotations. They have little to do with the definition of the word, but are aroused solely by the mention of the word.

G. To provide the students with more opportunities to distinguish between affective and informative connotations, write on the blackboard the following series of items and have them number the items one through four according to their preference:

SET I

You are mentally ill.
You have problems.
You are insane.
You are as crazy as a bed bug.

SET II

Prime ribs of beef
Flesh and bones
Dead Cow
Meat

Then ask them questions such as the following:
1. Why did you prefer the item you chose?

2. Why did you put as least preferable the one you did?
3. Do the items in each set have the same denotation or referent Explain.
4. Do they have the same connotation? Explain.

H. To reinforce how connotation is used in language and how we select words to show our feelings, distribute to the students the following list of words and discuss with them the connotations connected with the words. Point out that the referent could be the same in each series.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1. Discreet | cautious | cowardly |
| 2. loyal | obedient | slavish |
| 3. warmhearted | sentimental | mushy |
| 4. mature | old | decayed |
| 5. Pilgrim | immigrant | alien |
| 6. orator | influential speaker | rabble-rouser |
| 7. investigator | detective | flatfoot |

Ask them why they would use the words in the first column to describe something or somebody they liked, and why they would use the words in the third column to describe something or somebody they disliked. What is it about the words that show our attitude toward the object being described? Discuss with the class how some words have "good" connotations, in other words, create good feelings in us, while others have "bad connotations which create negative feelings in us. Also show how the words in the middle column tend to be neutral, arouse little feeling, either good or negative.

I. To give students further exercise in recognizing and using connotative language, pass out the work sheet "It's All How You Look at It." Have them read the first two selections and then compare them. Ask questions such as the following to elicit discussion.

1. Which article uses favorable words in discussing the subject?
2. Which writer dislikes the subject he is discussing? How do you know?
3. Is the information offered in both articles essentially the same? Explain.
4. What causes the great differences in attitude in the two articles?

J. Have the students read the third article and then tell them that they are to write an article that demonstrates a negative or positive attitude toward the subject (depending on which sheet is used), but they must present the same amount of information as the original article does. They may use the first two articles as models. There are two sets of models. One is fairly difficult and one is easy. The class may be divided into groups according to ability and both sets can be worked on in this fashion, or the easiest may be used first by all students to give them practice for working on the other one. Another possibility is that only the most difficult be given to a class that is able to deal with it reasonably well without practice work ahead of time.

WORKSHEET ON ARGUMENT

1. How many number two cans will fit in a standard size railroad box car?
2. How much time will it take that man to grow a four inch beard?
3. How many vampires are there in the Boston area?
4. How long is the horn of an average unicorn?
5. What kind of brooms do witches use to fly about on?
6. How many passengers does the U.S.S. United States carry each year?
7. How much heat must be created to make ice in the average refrigerator?
8. What is the main cause of corruption of the human soul?
9. Which countries of the world experience true freedom and liberty?
10. Why must a good country always conquer an evil country?

WORKSHEET

From whose point of view might each of the following be written

1. a) Celtics trounce Cincinnati.

   b) Royals lose close contest.

2. a) Revolutionary upstarts fire on troops.

   b) Patriots defend rights.

3. a) Aggressors invade homeland.

   b) Protectorate troops arrive.

4. a) French armies strategically withdraw.

   b) French armies retreat.

5. a) The rowdy ruffians yelled and shouted.

   b) The enthusiastic crowd cheered loudly.

Write pairs of statements similar to those above and indicate the words which reveal point of view.

"It's How You Look at It"

1. Five teenagers were loitering on the corner. As their raucous laughter cut through the air, we noticed their sloppy black leather jackets and their greasy long hair. They slouched against a building with cigarettes dangling contemptuously from their mouths.

2. Five youngsters stood on the corner. As the joy of their laughter filled the air, we noticed their loose-fitting, smooth jackets and the gleam of their smartly combed hair. They relaxed against a building smoking evenly on cigarettes that seemed almost natural in their serious young mouths.

3. Hordes of flies hovered over the garbage cans that stood along the edge of the dark alley. It was obviously a slum area whose fly-by-night inhabitants gave little time to keeping the area neat.

LESSON #4

OBJECTIVES: To define report, false report and judgment.

To distinguish among reports, false reports, and judgments.

MATERIALS: Mimeographed materials

PROCEDURE:

A. To provide the students with examples of reports, false reports and judgments, distribute the worksheet. Ask the students to write down the numbers of those items that could either be proved or disproved scientifically.

B. After the class has finished the assignment go over each item with the class asking them why they picked the items they did. Each time ask them how they would go about proving or disproving the statements. Items number 3, 4, 5, 7, 12, 13 and 14 cannot be proved or disproved. Ask the class how the statements that could not be proved or disproved could be changed so that by the addition of a few words or the subtraction of a few words they could be disproved or proved.

C. Tell the class that statements that can be proved or disproved are called reports or false reports depending on the outcome of scientific investigation and that statements that cannot proved or disproved are judgments or opinions. Ask them to look up in the dictionary definitions of judgment and report.

D. To provide further work in distinguishing among reports, false reports, and judgments, have the students make up three sentences for items such as the following. One sentence should be a report, one a false report, and one a judgment. Tell them to label each sentence according to what it is.

| | |
|---|---|
| a. food | f. Christmas |
| b. teachers | g. school |
| c. boys | h. home |
| d. girls | i. music |
| e. hot rods | j. government |

E. After the class has finished the above discussion, assign the student homework in which he is to select any short piece of writing--editorials, news reports, poetry, short story, etc. Tell him that the selection must accompany his analysis of the piece when he hands it in. In his analysis he should include:

1. The author's subject.
2. The author's attitude toward his subject.
3. Whether the author relies mainly on reports or judgments.
4. Proof for the author's use or overuse of reports or judgments.
5. The affective connotations (whether "good" or "bad") of the words the author uses.
6. The author's effectiveness in using connotation, report and judgment.

Tell the students the latter will invoke judgments on their part. Point out to them how an author must rely on the affective connotative value of words if he wants to arouse our emotions, whether these be good or bad.

WORKSHEET: Reports, False Reports, and Judgments

1. This room is 18 feet by 11 feet.
2. The principal of this school is a man.
3. Robert is intelligent.
4. His stupidity lost us the game.
5. He was afraid to answer.
6. Columbus discovered America in 1513.
7. Tom is religious.
8. That is a 1914 Ford.
9. A pound of feathers is heavier than three pounds of lead.
10. The Cleveland telephone book has 49[illegible],273 names in it.
11. Apple pie tastes better than cherry pie.
12. Tom is a filthy liar.
13. Democracy is the best form of government.
14. John Kennedy was a good man.

## OPINION? OR STATEMENT OF FACT?

The seventh President of the United States was Andrew Jackson.

Vanilla ice cream tastes better than chocolate ice cream.

A statement of fact can be proved true or false. The statement about Andrew Jackson, for example, can be checked by consulting an encyclopedia or a dictionary.

A statement of opinion, however, cannot be proved true or false. It is a personal reaction to facts, usually an expression of approval or disapproval.

Signals:

good, better, bad, pleasant, unpleasant, poor, great, etc. (value)

must, should, ought to (obligation)

will, shall, is sure to (prediction)

Practice:

Decide whether the following sentences are statement of fact or statement of opinion and tell which words give the clue:

1. Every student should have a part-time job. (Opinion-should)
2. Liver may not taste good, but it's good for you. (Opinion-good)
3. Russian dentists are smarter than American dentists. (Opinion-smarter)
4. Russian dentists use stainless steel for filling teeth. (Fact-can be verified)
5. "I must go down to the seas again." Masefield. (Opinion-must)
6. The doctor will be there in five minutes, Mrs. Harper. (Opinion-will be)

from Junior English Highlights
April-May, 1964
Scott, Foresman, p. 4.

WORKSHEET: FACT AND OPINION

I. Examine the following sentences and be prepared to distinguish between those which state verifiable facts and those which express the writer's opinion:

She goes to church every Sunday.
She is religious.

He is a mean teacher.
He has his students complete their assignments after school.

His face gets red when he talks to girls.
He is bashful.

II. Label each of the following statements "Fact" or "Opinion":

a) Tobacco tastes best when the filter's recessed.
b) Pall Malls give satisfying flavor.
c) They are outstanding and they are so mild.
d) Pall Malls are the product of the American Tobacco Company.
e) Yuban starts with aged coffee beans.
f) This is the difference that makes the world's richest coffee.
g) Emily Banks, Miss Rheingold of 1960, says, "My beer is Rheingold."
h) It's New York's largest selling beer.
i) The safest way to carry your money is American Express Travelers' Checques.
j) They cost only a penny a dollar.

III. What factual statements are needed to support the following opinions?

a) Merideth is shy.
b) Bob is studious.
c) Bob is too studious.
d) Shannon is a natural born historian.
e) Carol is aggressive.
f) Sandra is retiring.

IV. After each sentence is a blank space. In the blank space write F for Fact or O for Opinion.

This business of letting 18 year olds vote is a lot of nonsense.___ I'll admit that some kids are mature and sensible, but most of the young people today are babies.___ They have no sense of responsibility.___ Look at the accident rate for instance. The insurance companies had to make a special rate for young drivers. ___ Drivers in the 16-18 year old bracket have more accidents than drivers in the 21-25 year old bracket.___ Actually, the voting age should be 25 instead of 21.___

WORKSHEET: FACT AND OPINION

Label each statement F for Fact and O for Opinion.

A. 1. I always received an "A" in my math course.___
2. I received an "A" in algebra.___
3. I will do "A" work in grade 10 geometry.___
4. I am a good math student.___

B. 1. Susan refused to go to the dance with me.___
2. Janet said she was busy when I asked her to go.___
3. I'll never get a date for the prom.___
4. I am not very popular with girls.___

C. 1. Senator Green voted against the Civil Rights Bill.___
2. Senator Green doesn't want to help Negro citizens.___
3. Senator Green sends his children to segregated schools.___
4. Senator Green will never be elected President.___

D. 1. I am in tip-top condition.___
2. I haven't been ill since I was in kindergarten.___
3. When I was four, I had the measles.___
4. I don't need Blue Cross.___

E. 1. It was hot and humid all day yesterday.___
2. It rained all today.___
3. New England has terrible weather.___
4. The weather will probably be worse tomorrow.___

Label each of the following statements:

1. Bill has been to every band rehearsal this year.___
2. Bill will not miss tomorrow's rehearsal.___

3. Mary Ann has never been late for school.___
4. Mary Ann will not be tardy this week.___

5. Dave will be accepted by Harvard when he applies.___
6. Dave has never received a grade less than "A" in four years.___

7. We will never have a fire in this school.___
8. We have never had a fire in this school.___

9. The USSR will never attack the U.S.___
10. The USSR has never attacked the U.S.___

GRADE 8 COURSE OF STUDY

LESSON #1

OBJECTIVES: To define simile and metaphor

To recognize these figures of speech in the writing of others

To write original figures of speech

To avoid the use of cliches

MATERIALS: Mimeographed materials

PROCEDURES:

A. Tell the students that a figure of speech is a comparison. A comparison embodies two elements:

a. The items being compared.

b. The way in which they are compared

All aspects of a comparison need not always be explicit. In the comparison "A taxicab is like a private car," the similarities are obvious, so why go on?

1. A figure of speech is a poetic comparison: The items being compared must be apparently dissimilar. To say a taxicab is like a car is to make a comparison. But since they are obviously alike, there is NO poetic comparison.

   Contrast: "A car is like a cranky baby." No one would ever look at a cranky baby and say, "Look at the car." Hence, a <u>poetic</u> comparison.

2. Have the students give examples of poetic comparisons, discuss the comparisons involved, and analyze the parts of the comparison.

3. The comparison in a figure of speech may be <u>expressed</u>: "That car is <u>like</u> a cranky baby."

   Or it may be <u>implied</u>: "That car is a regular cranky baby."

4. Give the class examples of each kind of comparison and have them determine whether they are expressed or implied. Have the students give examples. Analyze the parts of the comparisons.

B. The expressed comparison is called a SIMILE. Since the comparison is expressed, certain connective words used to express it will automatically signal the structure:

a. "As" and its compounds "As much as," "as little as," etc.
b. "Like" and such unusual structures as the Biblical "like unto"
c. When the comparison involves using an adjective in the comparative degree--such as "longer" "wider" etc. ---the structure will be "-----er <u>than</u>" or "more --------- than"

1. Warn students to be careful of non-poetic comparisons:
   "The metal was as hard as rock." It probably was.
   "The lesson took longer than an hour." Often lessons do.

2. Be careful of statements: "I <u>like</u> ice-cream."

3. Be careful of such constructions as "My dog looks like an elephant."
   This is not a good comparison--merely a statement of opinion.

4. Pass out worksheet and discuss with class. (Parts A and B)

C. Tell the students that similes are expressed comparisons and that all the other figures of speech are METAPHORS. The clue to the metaphor is the equating of two apparently dissimilar things:
Contrast "My <u>father</u> is <u>like a bear</u> when he's angry;"
with "My father <u>is</u> a bear when he's angry.

1. Have class do Part C on the worksheet.

D. In a teacher-led discussion, working as a class, develop on the blackboard some similes. Change these to metaphors.

1. Working independently, children write original similes. These are shared.

2. Working independently, they change these to metaphors. These are shared.

3. Following the same pattern, write original metaphors. Change these to similes.

E. Learning to avoid triteness:

1. Collect some of the cliches produced, leaving key words blank:
   He was as strong as an _____.
   He was as _____ as an owl.

2. Ask how everyone knew the missing word. Introduce the term <u>trite</u>.
3. Assignment: Write four figures including both types so that they are not trite.

## WORKSHEET FOR LESSON 1 -- SIMILES AND METAPHORS

A. Find the sentences which contain similes. Be able to defend your answers.

1. She was taller than an average man.
2. The typewriter keys clicked more loudly than a tap dancer's shoes.
3. I like to sail better than anything else.
4. Her horse looks like a mule.
5. They gobbled down their food like two vacuum cleaners.
6. When he's happy, Henry gleams more than a little ray of sunshine.
7. He likes her more than he likes baseball.
8. Fear is a fog which clouds the mind.
9. Have you noticed how much like animals some people look?
10. He seeks out trouble the way a bloodhound tracks a criminal.

B. Find the similes in the following poem.

### A Red, Red, Rose

O, my luve is like a red, red rose,
That's newly sprung in June.
O my luve is like the melodie
That's sweetly played in tune.

As fair are thou, my bonnie lass,
So deep in luve am I,
And I will luve thee still my dear,
Till a' the seas gang dry.

Till a' the seas gang dry, my dear,
And the rocks melt wi' the sun!
And I will luve thee still, my dear,
While sands of life shall run.

And fare thee weel, my only luve,
And fare thee weel awhile!
And I will come again, my luve,
Though it were ten thousand mile!

--Robert Burns

C. Find the similes and metaphors in the poem below.

### There is a Garden in Her Face

There is a garden in her face
Where roses and white lilies grow;
A heavenly paradise is that place
Wherein all pleasant fruits do flow.
There cherries grow which none may buy
Till "Cherrie ripe" themselves do cry.

C. (cont.)

Those cherries fairly do enclose
Of orient pearl a double row,
Which when her lovely laughter showd,
They look like rose-buds filled with snow;
Yet them nor peer nor prince can buy,
Till "Cherrie ripe" themselves do cry.

Her eyes like angels watch them still,
Her brows like bended bows do stand.
Threatening with piercing frowns to kill
All that attempt, with eye or hand,
Those sacred cherries to come nigh
Till "Cherrie ripe" themselves do cry.

--Thomas Campron

Lesson #2: Hyperbole and Personification

OBJECTIVES: To define hyperbole and personification

To recognize hyperbole and personification in the writing of others

To write hyperbole and personification

MATERIALS: Mimeographed materials

PROCEDURES:

A. Define exaggeration. Explain that one type of figure of speech rests on exaggeration. Example: "We had a mountain of homework." "He hit the ball ninety miles." -- This is hyperbole.

1. Hyperbole can be expressed or implied --
"The team hit us <u>like</u> a steamroller." This is expressed.
Therefore it is a simile.
2. "The team steamrollered over us." This is implied.
Therefore it is a metaphor.
3. Find examples of hyperbole on the worksheet.
4. Have students write examples of hyperbole -- as similes and metaphors.

B. Another type of figure of speech attributes characteristics of humans to non-human things: The engine whispered." -- only people can whisper. Thus, personification. Note the root word "people" in personification. Personification can be structured as either simile or metaphor.

1. Find examples of personification in the worksheet.
2. Write personification of each type.

C. More sophisticated writing:

1. Take some of the more promising figures already written and work on these expanding the images thus:

a. Original: The boy ran like a snail.
b. The boy ran like a snail slithering slowly around the aquarium.
c. The boy running around the track was a snail slithering around the aquarium.
d. The boy, like a snail slithering around an aquarium, sloshed around the track, muddier than the Charles River at low tide.

2. Develop several such examples as a class.

3. Have students develop their own examples.

WORKSHEET FOR LESSON 2 -- PERSONIFICATION AND HYPERBOLE

A. Find the hyperbole in the following stanzas:

Daffodils

I wandered lonely as a cloud
That floats on high o'er vales and hills,
When all at once I saw a crowd,
A host of golden daffodils;
Beside the lake, beneath the trees,
Fluttering and dancing in the breeze.

Continuous as the stars that shine
And twinkle on the Milky Way
They stretched in never-ending line
Along the margin of a bay:
Ten thousand saw I at a glance,
Tossing their heads in sprightly dance.

--William Wordsworth

B. Find the personification in the following poem:

The Definition of Love

My love is of a birth as rare
As 'tis for object strange and high:
It was begotten by Despair
Upon Impossibility.

Magnanimous Despair alone
Could show me so divine a thing.
Where feeble Hope could ne'er have flown
But vainly flapped its tinsel wing.

And yet I quickly might arrive
Where my extended soul is fixed,
But Fate does iron wedges drive,
And always crowds itself betwixt.

For Fate with jealous eye does see
Two perfect loves, nor lets them close:
Their union would her ruin be,
And her tyrannic power depose.

. . . . . .

--Andrew Marvell

LESSON #3: Euphemism

OBJECTIVES: To understand that decency and "propriety" are powerful forces in changing the use of words.

To understand that language reflects the speaker's point of view.

MATERIALS: Mimeographed materials

PROCEDURES:

A. To develop the concept from the student's experience, ask the students to supply a list of words which we use in place of the word dead. (Passed away, departed, deceased, gone to his reward, no longer with us, kicked the bucket, a corpse)

1. Which of these words are polite and which are crude. (As the students distinguish the two, list words in two columns; if there are words about which they are not sure, place these in a center column. Label the three columns +, 0, and -.

2. Why do we have all these words and phrases for the term dead? (They don't scare people; to be polite; we don't like to talk about dying; they have better connotations.)

3. We do this with many occupations. Can someone suggest another word for undertaker? (mortician, embalmer) For doctor? (sawbones,quack, physician)

4. Why do people prefer some of these titles for their work to others that you have suggested? (They sound better; they have better connotation.)

B. To label the concept, at this point introduce the word euphemism and define it as rewording to make an item or action sound better.

1. We also do this in our every day situations. Suppose that a member of the class talks a great deal. What would be a good euphemism for that phrase? (Some students may answer with phrases of worse connotation; correct them and direct the discussion again toward euphemism -- words and phrases that sound <u>better</u>, e.g., He has great verbal skill.)

2. What would be a good euphemism for "That boy never sits still"? (He is very active; he is a very busy child.")

C. Work with the class on a writing problem which will aid the students in their comprehension of the concept.

1. Suppose that a group of boys playing in a vacant lot knocked a baseball through the window of the house next door. The person who lives in the house is a woman of 65 who lives alone and has complained to the boys' parents about their playing. She owns the lot on which they play. On this particular occasion she decides to call the police. The first thing she says to the lieutenant who answers is to describe herself, her home, her lot. Of course she uses euphemisms to do so. Let's write what she might say. (To provide a model for the next assignment and to reduce frustration, record the writing on the board as it develops.)

D. To allow for less teacher direction, divide the class into small groups to develop the next section of the writing.

1. Next she describes the boys and their activities. In this case, she uses words with harsh connotations. What would she say?

2. Write out this situation in your groups.

E. To give the students independence in their activity, make the following assignment:

1. Now the policemen come to the vacant lot and find the boys there. They ask the boys to describe what happened.

2. Write the description the boys would give of the woman and the description they would give of themselves and their activities.

F. After this assignment has been finished, conclude the lesson by asking the students to fold a sheet of paper into three columns heading them (-) for bad connotations, (0) for neutral words, and (+) for euphemisms. Begin the list with the students by filling in the words developed in part A of this lesson plan.

1. Now add to this list the words from the composition you have just written. Try to fill in all three columns.

2. Listen carefully to the conversations you hear around school and at home today. Add additional words to this list from what you hear today. Be prepared to share the list with the class tomorrow.

WORKSHEET -- EUPHEMISMS

Underline the euphemisms in each set where one is present:

1. ugly - homely
2. mortician - undertaker
3. hairdresser - beautician
4. garbage collector - sanitary engineer
5. cop - flat foot
6. pawn shop - loan office
7. reconditioned - second hand
8. used - pre-owned
9. porch - sun deck
10. refuse - junk
11. gut - intestine
12. halitosis - bad breath
13. wig - hair piece
14. employee - worker
15. teacher - educator
16. wife - the little woman
17. pilot - aviator
18. marriage - wedded bliss
19. lawyer - attorney
20. bathroom - powder room

LESSON #4: Advertising Analysis

OBJECTIVES: To apply the tools of semantic analysis

To identify the use of reports, judgments and affective connotation in written advertisements

To recognize the referent of an advertisement and the use of abstractions in advertisements

MATERIALS: Advertisements from magazines
Mimeographed materials

PROCEDURES:

A. To stimulate critical evaluation and thinking through the use of semantic tools, have students in the class select advertisements from magazines. In a discussion analyze the advertisements for the delusion and fantasies produced through the use of words and visual apparatus

1. The picture of an ad frequently tries to influence through the settings, objects and people which aacompany a product... the rugged masculine man on horseback in the mountains (Marlboro Country). Are the settings, people, or objects used usually related to the product's qualities or not? (Salem - Springtime; pretty girls - Dodge fever; Canadian Club - drink of the daring adventurers)
   Analyze the picture for the following:
   a. Color connotation
   b. Grouping or packaging techniques

2. Ads try to use words of favorable connotation to accompany their product and words of unfavorable connotation to characterize their competitors. 747's are spacious (why not cavernous?) The new cigar is slender (why not skinny?) Things are inexpensive, never cheap, and beers are light or fullbodied, never heavy or underweight.
   Analyze the copy of the ad for the following:
   a. the symbol applied to the referent
   b. phrases with affective and informative connotation
   c. reports
   d. judgments
   e. levels of abstraction

3. Criticize the blurb for the following:
   a. Promise of health
   b. Promise of wealth
   c. Assurance of social prominence
   d. Association with romance and domestic bliss
   e. Promise of personal popularity
   f. Appeal to economy
   g. Aura of fashion and elegance
   h. Emotional appeal (a poor child; a parent and child; etc.)

LESSON #4 (cont.)

B. Divide the class into small groups and ask each group to analyze a different set of ads in the same manner.

C. To evaluate the individual's ability to apply the concepts of advertising analysis, ask the students to select an advertisement other than the ones used in the class and write a critique utilizing the concepts discussed above.

D. Have the students create their own ads.

a. Create a product
b. Create a trademark to symbolize the product
c. Use illustrations, headings, and captions
d. Make sure the colors fit the mood you are creating
e. Remember you are selling a product.

GRADE 9 COURSE OF STUDY

LESSON #1: Introduction to Propaganda

OBJECTIVES: To develop a critical attitude toward all forms of propaganda, whether they be "good" or "bad" forms of propaganda

To understand the techniques used in propaganda

To understand that scrutiny is necessary to distinguish between propaganda and scientific truths and facts

MATERIAL: Mimeographed material

PROCEDURES:

A. Pass out mimeographed sheets on which the following sentences appear and have the students divide into groups to decide whether the statements can be proven or not. Ask them to explain the reasons for their answers on paper.

1. President Kennedy is the greatest President this country has ever had.
2. President Kennedy was born on December 7, 1917.
3. President Kennedy was born on September 6, 1920.
4. All living men use their lungs to breathe.
5. Democracy is the best form of government.
6. Hemingway is the greatest writer of the twentieth century.
7. There are 42,726 books in the public library.
8. There are fifty people in that neighborhood who read newspapers.
9. Cletus is a fool.
10. Water contains two parts of oxygen to one part of hydrogen.

After the students finish the assignment, discuss their answers with the whole class. Emphasize the importance of facts and lead the students to be aware that many statements offered as facts are only opinions.

B. Divide the class into groups and have each group arrive at a definition for both "fact" and "opinion." After the discussion, each group can present its definition. The teacher can note the main points on the blackboard and add any points the students may have omitted. Then the class can develop a working definition.

C. Definition of propaganda:
"The relatively deliberate manipulation by means of symbols (words, gestures, flags, images, monuments, music, etc.) of other people's thoughts or actions with respect to beliefs, values, and behaviors which these people (reactors) regard as controversial."
INTERNATIONAL ENCYCLOPEDIA OF THE SOCIAL SCIENCES, Vol. 12. 1968. p. 579.

D. Have each student look in newspapers or magazines to select an article in which the author uses opinion and another article that uses scientific fact. When they bring these articles to class, select some to be read aloud, and then let the students tell why they believe one depends mostly on opinion and another on fact.

Bias Words at Work

1. Note the distinction: "I saw the incident: Billy sneaked into the yard and stole the bicycle." -- "I too saw the incident: Billy walked quietly into the yard and took the bicycle."

2. Label the following statements:

   a. After Congressman Philips wasted as much time as he could waste, he finally stumbled through his speech. Biased for___Biased against____

   b. After Congressman Philips weighed every aspect of the important controversy, he rendered his momentous decision. For____ Against____

   c. Danny's shifty eyes darted suspiciously around the room until he located his accomplice. For____ Against____

   d. Danny's eyes moved brightly across the room until he located his friend. For____ Against____

   e. The embassy official refused to admit his guilt. For____ Against____

   f. The embassy official courageously maintained his innocence. For____ Against____

   g. Harry ("Killer") Kane, the notorious gambler, was questioned by police about a gangland slaying. For____ Against____

   h. Mr. Harold Kane, well known in local racing circles, was asked to comment about recent events by local authorities. For____ Against____

3. Newspaper headline, "Trial on War Criminals to Open Tuesday," (1) assumes that the people to be tried are innocent, (2) assumes that the people to be tried are guilty, (3) makes no assumption of the guilt or innocence of the persons to be tried.

4. A newspaper article which is headlined "Acheson Makes Reply to McCarthy Diatribe" is apt to be: (1) favorable to Acheson, (2) favorable to McCarthy, (3) impartial.

5. "Smears on Cabinet Boomerang" is a headline which is: (1) slanted in favor of the cabinet, (2) slanted against the cabinet, (3) unbiased.

Recognizing Biased Work:

The President achieved (notoriety fame) by (tenaciously stubbornly), (bitterly vigorously), (zealously fanatically) asserting his (bold claims impudent pretentions) even in legislative councils through his (tools agents) who(skillfully cunningly) (insinuated introduced) themselves into those councils. The Senate being in accord with his (prejudices principles) (succumbed yielded) to his (domination leadership). He was a man of (faith superstition) and of (obstinacy strength of purpose) whose policy combined (firmness and courage bigotry and arrogance) with (cowardice caution).

He was a (man creature) of strong (biases convictions) and belonged in the camp of the (reactionaries conservatives). His conduct of the Presidency (portended foreshadowed) a (change degeneration) of that office into one of (dictatorship leadership).

LESSON #2: Name Calling and Glittering Generality

OBJECTIVES: To recognize these two propaganda techniques

MATERIALS: Mimeographed material

PROCEDURES:

A. Present on the blackboard a sentence such as: "The anti-American, Communistic spirit of Senator Cope makes it perfectly clear why he has been called upon to appear at this committee hearing today." Ask the students the following questions to direct their thinking:

1. What can you tell me about Senator Cope?
2. Where is Senator Cope, and what is about to happen to him?
3. What words in the sentence turn you against him?
4. How do we know Senator Cope is anti-American and Communistic?
5. Do you think it is enough to take the speaker's word that the senator is anti-American and Communistic?

B. On the basis of answers developed, ask the students to write a definition of "name calling." Students who need more help in developing the concept of "name calling" may work with the following examples:

1. The fault-finders of the Democratic Party are constantly threatening our way of life.
2. Can we allow the greedy spirit in the Republican Party to become wide-spread in our country?
3. The inhuman and grasping nature of our opponent is what we are against.
4. In his usual sissy way George started crying when he saw that the game was lost.

C. To introduce glittering generalities, have the students examine the same selection used in the name calling example. Substitute the word "Commissar" for "Senator." Explain the word "Commissar."

1. What can you tell me about Commissar Cope
2. In what country does he live?
3. Is he an important person?
4. Where is Commissar Cope, and what is about to happen to him?
5. If you were a Communist living in Russia, what would be your reaction to the above statement about Commissar Cope?
6. How do we know Commissar Cope is anti-American and Communistic?
7. Is it enough to take the speaker's word that Commissar Cope is anti-American and Communistic?
8. What is the difference between the use of the words "anti-American" and "Communistic" in the two sentences presented on the blackboard?

9. Is there any way to prove scientifically that the words are true, even though at one time they are used to damage the name of a person and at another time to praise the person?

The term"glittering generality" can now be presented to the class. The class should note that glittering generalities differ only from name calling in that glittering generalities are used in praise whereas name calling is used to turn us against some idea or some person.

D. Ask the students to give a definition for the term "glittering generalities." The definition should note that these devices do not use scientific fact, but they depend solely on the connotative value of words used by a speaker to prejudice our attitudes toward a given subject. Both techniques are used to make us accept and approve, or reject and condemn without examining the evidence. Have the students examine the following examples of glittering generalities:

a. The Liberty-loving and God-fearing Democratic Party wishes to bring progress to our nation.

b. Now is the time for true Americans to back the cause of freedom by voting for the man of truth, the Republican Party's candidate.

c. Courageous George, a clean sportsman, walked across the bridge to his car.

d. In a time of stress, dedicated George in his usual loyal manner worked like a true martyr despite constant set-backs.

E. Ask the students to write two paragraphs. One paragraph should use the Name Calling technique, and the other should use the Glittering Generalities technique. The subject of both paragraphs should be the same in order that the students will clearly observe that by changing the words with "bad" connotations for words with "good" connotative value, they change the attitude of the reader or listener toward the subject.

LESSON #3: Transfer

OBJECTIVES: To recognize the use of this propaganda device

MATERIALS: Study Guide: The propaganda technique of transfer

PROCEDURES:

A. Divide the students into heterogeneous groups and distribute the study guide. From the study guide, the students should come to the conclusion that the pictures of the great Americans, the cross, and the flag are things that we respect and revere. The speaker in the illustration is trying to transfer to himself and his cause the feelings and ideas we associate with these things by displaying them prominently for all to see. The transfer technique is not limited to visual materials. It can be employed in words. The students should be aware that they would probably react favorably to the surroundings rresented in the illustration.

B. After discussing the questions in the study guide and the term "Transfer," the student should reread the words of the speaker and answer the following questions:

1. Does the speaker try to associate anything we respect and revere to his cause? (God, Christ, the American way of life, liberty, freedom.)
2. Why do you think the speaker includes these things in his speech?
3. What does the speaker really want his movement to do?
4. Is the speaker really advocating freedom and liberty for all?
5. Do you think that "liquidating" all opponents is God-like or Christ-like?
6. Is it part of the "American way of life" to completely destroy or kill your opposition?
7. Is it part of our "American way of life" to eliminate the Senate and the House of Representatives?
8. Do you think the things that the speaker tries to associate with his cause are really compatible with his cause?

The teacher should make sure that the students are aware that the propagandist in using the transfer technique is hoping that we will connect with him, without being critical, the authority, the sanction, and the prestige of things we respect and revere. The teacher can also use the speech presented in the illustration to review name calling and glittering generalities.

C. Ask the students to write a paragraph in which they show how the transfer technique is used in something with which they are familiar. They should tell what ideas or feelings are involved in the situation they describe, and why they think the person would want to transfer these feelings or ideas to himself or to something else. Some examples for discussion to help the students think can be discussed in class.

1. Why would a boy who was never involved in sports appear in public with a sweater that had a large school letter and marks on the sleeve that indicated he had won a letter for three years in sports.

2. Why would a boy who does not really like to smoke always put a cigarette in his mouth when he is with his gang?

3. Why would a company that is primarily interested in making money spend large amounts of money for movies for schools and for advertising that only emphasized the good that it does for the public?

4. Why would a man who seldom reads a book have on display a large library filled with expensive volumes?

STUDY GUIDE: The Propaganda Technique of Transfer

A man is standing on the stage which has six large American flags displayed prominently along the front of the stage. Behind the man are huge pictures of George Washington, Abraham Lincoln, and Thomas Jefferson. Above the man hangs a large cross that is spotlighted in order that it can be easily seen. The man is wearing an academic gown and cap. He is speaking....

"Following the principles of God, our movement must conquer the small, stupid minds that stand in the way of the American way of life. With Christlike determination we must completely destroy all opposition to the American Fascist movement. If we are to succeed, the devil institutions of the Senate and the House of Representatives must be erased from the face of our liberty-loving land. God is our guide. God will see that the American Fascist movement will liquidate all who oppose us. Freedom, God, and the American Fascist cannot fail."

1. What do you think of George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, and Abraham Lincoln?

2. Why do you think the speaker had the pictures of Washington, Jefferson, and Lincoln displayed behind him?

3. What does the cross or the American flag mean to you? What are they symbols of?

4. Why do you think the speaker had these objects placed on the stage with him?

5. Why does the speaker wear an academic gown and cap? Was he trying to tell you something about himself without saying it?

LESSON #4: Testimonial

OBJECTIVES: To recognize this propaganda device

MATERIALS: None

PROCEDURES:

A. Present the following situation to the class:

A candidate is running for the office of governor of your state. He has a number of people appear on television supporting him in his campaign. The people supporting him are the President of the United States, a famous movie actress, the head of the Chamber of Commerce, a leading labor leader, a television comedian, and a group of religious leaders.

Ask the students the following questions:

1. Why do you think the candidate has these people speak on his behalf?

2. Who was the candidate trying to influence by using such different personalities?

3. What people would most likely be influenced by each different personality?

4. Are all of these people really qualified to judge the candidate?

5. How do you think each personality was motivated to endorse the candidate?

The students should realize that the testimonial technique attempts to make us accept things on the basis of the prestige or authority of the person who does the endorsing. We are not asked to think about the qualifications of the things being endorsed, and we are not expected to examine evidence. We are just told something or someone is good or bad because the endorser says so.

B. Have the students bring to class an ad using a testimonial. They should ask whether the person giving the testimonial is qualified to give it, or whether the person is motivated by some ulterior motive.

LESSON #5: Plain Folks and Bandwagon

OBJECTIVES: To recognize this propaganda device

MATERIALS: None

PROCEDURES:

A. Present the class a group of questions that will help them understand the Plain Folks technique.

1. Which person would you trust more--a person who appears to be down to earth like you, or a person who seems distant and not part of your group? Why?

2. Would you tend to trust a neighbor or an outsider more? Why?

3. Which person would you like more--a man running for political office who appears to enjoy the homey things of life and goes to picnics with his neighbors and seems like a real down-to-earth person, or a politician who keeps himself from the people and does not seem to have the same feelings and interests that ordinary men have? Why?

4. Why do men who wish to influence us try to appear to be just like us? Why do they want to appear as "just plain folks among their neighbors"?

5. If we say that each of the questions we've used illustrates a technique in propaganda called the PLAIN FOLKS technique, how would you define this propaganda technique?

B. Present to the class the following situation: a fashion magazine reports that women are wearing the hem of their dresses an inch below the knee this year.

1. What would make a girl want to hem all dresses an inch below the knee?

2. Why do people usually like to do what everybody else is doing?

3. Why is it hard for an individual to go against what everyone else considers proper?

4. Why do kids follow a parade on their bikes when they aren't really a part of it?

5. When fellow students tell us that everybody else is watching a particular program, do we usually make it a point to watch that program in order to be able to discuss it with our friends, or do we just ignore it?

6. Why would a politican tell us, "Everybody's on our side. Be on the winning side. Vote for us."

The students should be aware that most people like to follow the crowd and that we usually will follow what our group is doing. We are held together by common ties of nationality, race, sex, vocation, religion, and environment. The propagandist usually will appeal to these ties by saying that the rest of our group is doing something; therefore, we should also. The term BAND WAGON can be used in connection with this propaganda technique.

LESSON #6: Culminating Activities

OBJECTIVES: To review the techniques of propaganda
To discover other techniques used in propaganda

MATERIALS: Advertisements and newspaper stories

PROCEDURES:

A. Assign each student the task of turning in an ad, editorial, or essay that illustrates each technique and a written analysis explaining how each item uses the technique.

B. Analyze a political speech or an ad, looking for techniques not mentioned in the unit: The Big Lie (Hitler was a master of this one), Half Truths, Ridicule, and Card Stacking, for example.

OPTIONAL MATERIAL: "Propaganda Techniques," a film from Coronet.

Recognizing Emotional Appeals

Persuasion rests primarily upon reasoning from facts, but it is reinforced by arousing the emotions through wording or through connecting the argument with the natural feelings of the intended audience. Three qualities of proper emotional appeals are: (1) tactful avoidance of anything that may arouse hostile feelings, (2) avoidance of resting the argument upon emotional appeals to the neglect of reason, and (3) avoidance of common misuses of emotionalism such as the following devices:

1. Name calling: giving something a bad label, so that we will automatically condemn and reject it.

   Example: "Fraternities have no more place in our public school system than a Hitler youth movement."
   Tests: Ask: "What does the label mean? What are the possible motives of the person using it?"

2. Glittering generality: giving something a good label so that we will automatically accept it without examining evidence.

   Example: "Cast your vote for the program of the Peace Party."
   Tests: Ask: "Is the idea accepted simply because of the good name given it? What merit would it have without the name?"

3. Transfer: carrying authority, sanction and prestige of something espected and revered over to something else in order to make the latter acceptable.

   Example: "You should see this movie. The Roman Catholic Church approves it."
   Tests: Ask: Is this institution an expert on the subject in question? What is the idea worth in itself?"

4. Testimonial: having some respected or hated person say that a given idea is good or bad.

   Example: "Smoke Lucky Strikes. Winston Churchill does."
   Tests: Ask: "Is this person an expert on the subject in question? What is the idea worth without the testimonial?"

5. Plain Folks: attempting to convince by saying that a man and his ideas are good because they are "of the people."

   Example: "Raised on a farm, youngest in a family of six, Willie Jones has not been spoiled by fame. He knows the common man. Elect him to this office."
   Tests: Ask: "What are the man's ideas worth when divorced from the Plain Folk appeal?"

6. Band wagon: attempting to convince by assuring that everyone in the group is doing, thinking, or buying a certain thing.

   Example: "Madam,you should buy a Little Wonder Washing Machine. I have an order from every lady in your neighborhood."
   Tests: Ask: "Does other people's acceptance constitute a real reason for your acceptance?"

## QUIZ ON PROPAGANDA TECHNIQUES

Name the propaganda techniques in the following examples?

1. The whole ninth grade is planning to attend the Valentine Dance.

2. Our American servicemen abroad uphold our beliefs in God and freedom in many bases around the world.

3. The President has endorsed our local building program and called it "an example for other cities to follow."

4. Everyone in the city is taking part in the rejuvenation of the downtown area.

5. Mr. Jones, who owns a local farm, recently said he was in favor of federal aid to agriculture.

6. Our bigoted, ignorant city manager has unthinkingly voted against the new library.

7. Several generous women of our town have recently established a community nursery school as a wonderful goodwill gesture.

SOME SENTENCES MAY FIT MORE THAN ONE PROPAGANDA TECHNIQUE.

## PROPAGANDA TECHNIQUES

News Report (factual)

"The strike between the Operator's Union and the Rapid Transit Company is now entering its 30th day. The operators are demanding a 25-cent-per-hour wage increase and the company has countered with an offer of a 10-cent-an-hour increase. No settlement is in progress.

Same Report Propagandized for the Operators:
"The good citizen interested in fair play is watching the dispute between the Operator's Union and the Rapid Transit Company with a mixture of admiration and alarm. He knows the average operator is trying to maintain a decent home for his wife and children, and that living costs have sky-rocketed to the highest point in history. Even when the operator is working (to make management richer) he can scarcely make ends meet. While the Company officials sit out the strike complacently in plush offices and smoke 50-cent cigars to pass the time, the carman is worrying about shoes to carry his children back to school and milk for their lunch pails. The solid citizen takes off his hat to the patient courage of the operator, but he, too, is wondering what will happen to the innocent youngsters.

Same Report Propagandized for the Company:
"In some circles, the sympathy in any strike goes to the workers. But what are the facts in the current hold-up by the Operator's Union for wage increases? Despite miracles of economy in operation, rising costs have forced R.T. Co. to operate at a loss for the past two years. In the interest of public service, no dividends have been declared and top management agreed to sharp cuts in personal salaries. Meantime the workers have asked for and received three separate wage boosts, so that they are now better paid than the police and the teachers. But still they can't live on their wages. Caviar and Cadillacs come high this year.

"Fortunately the Company does not need to be concerned about the public reaction. The people are too smart to be duped by gangster tactics. With the facts on the table it becomes entirely clear that the operators are not striking for groceries but for glory. Labor has its eye on the national scene."

from Power and Speed in Reading
Doris W. Gilbert, Prentice-Hall,
c. 1954. p. 150.

Insidious words with emotion-provoking connotations:

| | |
|---|---|
| The sneering capitalists | You are thinking people |
| Gangster tactics | True Americans who see clearly |
| Flagrant betrayal | Men of distinction |
| Witch hunting | The give-away boys |
| Sob-sister routine | Half-baked theories |
| Boondoggling | Reactionaries |
| Stench of the donkey | War-mongers |

## NON-SLANDEROUS POLITICAL SHEAR SPEECH
from Mad Magazine

My fellow citizens, it is an honor and a pleasure to be here today. My opponent has openly admitted he feels an affinity toward your city, but I happen to like this area. It might be a salubrious place to him, but to me it is one of the nation's most delightful garden spots.

When I embarked upon this political campaign I hoped that it could be conducted on a high level and that my opponent would be willing to stick to the issues. Unfortunately, he has decided to be tractable instead--to indulge in unequivocal language, to eschew the use of outright lies in his speeches, and even to make repeated veracious statements about me.

At first I tried to ignore these scrupulous, unvarnished fidelities. Now I will do so no longer. If my opponent wants a fight, he's going to get one!

It might be instructive to start with his background. My friends, have you ever accidentally dislodged a rock on the ground and seen what was underneath? Well, exploring my opponent's background is dissimilar. All the slime and filth and corruption you can possibly imagine, even in your wildest dreams, are glaringly nonexistent in this man's life. And even during his childhood.

Let us take a very quick look at his childhood: it is a known fact that on a number of occasions, he emulated older boys at a certain playground. It is also known that his parents not only permitted him to masticate excessively in their presence, but even urged him to do so. Most explicable of all, this man who poses as a paragon of virtue exacerbated his own sister when they were both teenagers.

I ask you, my fellow Americans: is this the kind of person we want in public office to set an example for our youth?

Of course, it's not surprising that he should have such a typically pristine background--no, not when you consider the other members of his family.

His female relatives put on a constant pose of purity and innocence, and claim they are inscrutible, yet every one of them has taken part in hortatory activities.

The men in the family are likewise completely amenable to moral suasion.

My opponent's second cousin is a Mormon.

His uncle was a flagrant heterosexual.

His sister, who has always been obsessed by sects, once worked as a proselyte outside a church.

His father was secretly chagrined at least a dozen times by matters of a pecuniary nature.

His youngest brother wrote an essay extolling the virtues of being a homo sapiens.

His great-aunt expired from a degenerative disease.

His nephew subscribes to a phonographic magazine.

His wife was a thespian before their marriage and even performed the act in front of paying customers.

And his own mother had to resign from a woman's organization in her later years because she was an admitted sexagenarian.

Now what shall we say of the man himself?

I can tell you in solemn truth that he is the very antithesis of political radicalism, economic irresponsibility and personal depravity. His own record proves that he has frequently discountenanced treasonable, un-American philosophies and has perpetrated many overt acts as well.

He perambulated his infant son on the street.

He practiced nepotism with his uncle and first cousin.

Non-Slanderous Political Smear Speech (cont.)

He attempted to interest a 13-year-old girl in philately.

He participated in a seance at a private residence where, among other odd goings-on, there was incense.

He has declared himself in favor of more homogenity on college campuses.

He has advocated social intercourse in mixed company--and has taken part in such gatherings himself.

He has been deliberately averse to crime in our city streets.

He has urged our Protestant and Jewish citizens to develop more catholic tastes.

Last summer he committed a piscatorial act on a boat that was flying the American flag.

Finally, at a time when we must be on our guard against all foreign isms, he has coolly announced his belief in altruism--and his fervent hope that some day this entire nation will be altruistic!

I beg you, my friends, to oppose this man whose life and work and ideas are so openly and avowedly compatible with our American way of life. A vote for him would be a vote for the perpetuation of everything we hold dear.

The facts are clear; the record speaks for itself.

Do your duty.